



Comprehensive Facilities Plan Press Conference

Thank you Councilmember Thomas and all of our partners who are here today.

I've said it so many times before in so many different locations— at shuttered school building after shuttered school building: *we are talking about **basic human rights**.*

- *The basic human right to work and learn in an environment that is safe, healthy— and will not poison you.*
- And what unfolded at Building 21— and nearly a dozen schools before it— is shameful.
- It shows exactly what happens when we fail time and again to protect the fundamental human rights of our young people and school staff.

Let me remind us all that we are, in fact, violating our Commonwealth's constitution.

- We are not providing our young people with a thorough and efficient system of public education when we are allowing them to enter buildings that can have life-long impacts on their health.

*It is shameful, and it would **never, ever** be tolerated in a wealthier, whiter school district.*

Let's also remember that it's the money—yes— **and** it's the process.

- The District knew about the damaged asbestos at Building 21— and did nothing — is reprehensible.
- Last week, I talked with so many frightened staff and parents who were rightfully enraged. They rightfully sought explanations and answers for this egregious error, and they wanted a path forward.

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- For decades, this union has fought for not only significant investments in our facilities, but also in a process that is *truly* collaborative **and transparent**.
 - It's exactly why the PFT founded the Fund Our Facilities Coalition, now more than 70 elected officials and organizations strong. The situation at Building 21 outlines exactly why this advocacy is essential.
 - I appreciated Dr. Watlington's acknowledgement of how unacceptable this situation is.
 - He is absolutely right that accountability in the wake of this grievous error is essential.

Yesterday, today, and every day moving forward, we are *relentlessly* focused on ensuring real solutions to a crisis that simply cannot stand. Thank you.